Starvation deaths in Palamau district of Jharkhand

2371. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported starvation deaths in Palamau district of Jharkhand; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM-RAJU): (a) and (b) There were reports in the press about starvation deaths in the Palamau district of Jharkhand. However,on investigation by State Government it was found that no person had died on account of starvation.

Prices of sugar

2372. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of sugar have risen by around 35-40 per cent during the past six months;

(b) if so, whether the prospects of improving the industry with the introduction of monthly quotas, future trading and the availability of transport subsidy have fuelled expectations of investors in this sector;

(c) whether the Central and State Governments have been able to formulate a policy on upstream product-sugarcane product and the movement of downstream products; and

(d) if so, to what extent these steps have been able to help the sugar industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The sugar prices have marginally declined during the past six months. The Government has allowed introduction of future trading in sugar with a view to ensure certain degree of price stability. Government has also framed rules for reimbursement of internal transport and freight

charges on export shipments of sugar with a view to promote export of sugar. In respect of release of sugar for the months of July and August, 2002, such release have been made on monthly basis. The impact of these measures is yet to be seen.

(c) and (d) The Central Government has amended the Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982 for providing financial assistance for bagasse based co-generation of power and production of ethanol from alcohol. These measures are expected to help the sugar industry in improving its viability.

Decontrol of Sugar Prices

2373. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the 'Financial Express' dated the 1st July, 2002 captioned "Monthly quota may dampen sugar decontrol";

(b) if so, whether Government have examined the report;

(c) whether this decision was taken by Government in view of sugar prices at Rs. 1,350-1,400 per quintal in April-June, 2002, which was 14-15 per cent down from Rs. 1550-1600 levels of April-June, 2001; and

(d) if so, to what extent Government have been able to help the sugar industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The sugar prices have marginaly declined during the past six months. The Government has allowed introduction of Forward/Future Trading in sugar with a view to ensure certain degree of price stability. Government has also framed the rules for reimbursement of internal